

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 - 6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



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## MINUTES

### CALL MEETING BACK TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting, which recessed on January 9, back to order at 6:00 PM, followed by the invocation by Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte and Pledge of Allegiance.

### PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee

Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

### ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

Town Attorney Noel Fox

Mayor Barbee recognized former Mayor Dennis Barbour in the audience.

### ADOPT THE AGENDA

**ACTION:** Motion to adopt the agenda

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. Set a Public Hearing for February 13, 2024, to Consider a Special Use Permit Modification for Additional Boat Slips Located at 401 Marina Street PID 313115.74.1321.000 and 313115.64.8036 in the Marina Business and R-1B District  
Applicant: CBYC, LLC
2. Adopt Resolution to Designate Staff to Authorize to Execute and File Applications for Federal and State Assistance
3. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

Council Member Benson asked if item 2 is regarding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) elevating homes. Mr. Oakley said the Town is taking grant applications and turning them over to the State for awarding and management of projects.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked how many are typically awarded. Planning Director Jeremy Hardison said an average of five homes are awarded, and this year there was a record number of 21 applications.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the consent agenda

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

#### 4. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Mr. Parvin introduced Patrick Conley of the Carolina Beach Bar Club to present information about a new event.

Mr. Conley said the club has raised \$750,000 for individuals on the island, regional charities, and other area non-profit organizations. He said the group was approached by Nollie's Taco Joint to assist with a fundraiser for Friends of CB Parks & Greenways, a March 23 skate competition called the Nollie's Street Skate Jam. Mr. Conley said organizers would like to request closure of a portion of Pelican Lane during the daytime event. He said this will not affect the Scotchman store's operations. Mr. Conley said the goal for fundraising is \$5,000 to \$10,000 through sponsorships, merchandises sales, and raffles.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the Nollie's Street Skate Jam as presented

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

#### 5. Update from Friends of CB Parks & Greenways

Nick Hahn of Friends of CB Parks & Greenways gave an update on the non-profit organization's projects. He said all projects are Town-approved and largely community-driven, including the dog park, tree project, and skate park expansion.

Regarding the skate park expansion, Mr. Hahn said the group has raised \$223,000 toward the project along with \$175,000 provided by the Town. He said the expansion broke ground last week, but the group will continue to raise funds. Mr. Hahn thanked Council and presented a gift of gratitude, a skateboard deck, to Mayor Barbee.

Council Member Hoffer asked about the expected completion date for the expansion. Mr. Hahn said this should be sometime in April.

#### 6. Presentation by Girl Scout Troop 4785 Regarding the 2024 Silver Award Project

Members of Girl Scout Troop 4785 gave a presentation about their proposed 2024 Silver Award project, which they expect to complete in May or June. They want to create a Little Free Library at Lake Park that in addition to books includes binoculars, photographs, and other information about birds. The girls plan to seek the help of local residents who want to make small monetary donations or contribute bird photos they have taken. The troop installed distance markers around the Island Greenway for their Bronze Award project.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte suggested that the girls connect with Virginia Holman to be a resource for the project.

#### 7. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley reviewed the calendar for the FY 24-25 budget:

- Budget open house – January 16 4:00-6:00 PM in the Multi-Purpose/Police Training Room
- Strategic planning retreat – January 25 and 26
- Public hearing for non-profit requests – March 12
- Public hearing for community input – April 9
- Budget workshop – April 23
- Budget workshop – April 30
- Budget open house – May 7
- Public hearing for community input – May 14
- Budget message presented – May 28
- Budget adoption – June 11

Mr. Oakley also gave an update on various projects:

- Marina: Completion is expected in February.
  - South end improvements: The Town is taking input for the final phase.
- Lake Park improvements
  - Brandy Myers Memorial Playground: All materials have arrived, and installation of major equipment should be completed next week with final completion expected in late February; a ribbon cutting will follow. The playground will include some Braille elements.
  - Dredge and stabilization: This project is still behind, but the contractor has made a major push to catch up and improvements are rapidly happening. Substantial completion is expected in late February, with cleanup to follow.
  - Pump/pump house: A purchase order for the pump has been issued, and staff is awaiting renderings of the housing that will hide the pump. No taxpayer funds are going toward these projects at Lake Park, and the status of them can be found on the Town's website or by calling Town Hall.

Council Member Benson asked if the proposed design of the retention wall on Florida Avenue is ready to go to Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) for approval. Mr. Hardison said staff is meeting in two weeks with CAMA and property owners to try to come up with a game plan for how to proceed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paul Levy of 1606 Mackerel Lane asked Council to consider cutting premium parking from the proposed parking ordinance for 2024. He said there is no need for premium parking in the off-season that does not honor resident passes, and this may damage Boardwalk businesses and alienate taxpayers. Mr. Levy suggested that Council reconsider premium parking for 2025 after getting direct input from Boardwalk business owners. He recommended that the Town establish a parking planning committee by the end of this budget season.

Cindy Dunn of 915 Tidewater Lane said she does not see anything in the proposed parking ordinance about non-resident passes, and she wants to figure out a way to make those available again so non-residents can support local businesses. She suggested parking enforcement stop at 8:00 PM instead of 9:00 PM, and she shared Mr. Levy's concerns about premium parking. Ms. Dunn asked how much revenue the Town is getting from parking passes for building contractors.

Kristen Dunn of 907 Ocean Boulevard expressed concerns about whether the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk project could be done in a professional or timely manner. She asked that residents of the area be kept informed of the plan, especially when contractors are expected to start work.

Amanda Hassler of 212 Hamlet Avenue Unit 2 asked Council to consider offering a limited number of non-resident parking passes and said not having them is an exclusionary practice.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

8. Conditional Zoning Modification to Consider an Outdoor Drinking and Serving Area and Landscaping for the Event Venue/Bar at 205 Charlotte Avenue in the Central Business District  
Applicant: Kindred Carolina Beach, LLC

Applicant Kindred Carolina Beach, LLC, was approved for an Event Venue/Bar at 205 Charlotte Avenue as a use in the Central Business District (CBD) on July 11, 2023. Event Venues/Bars are allowed through the approval of Conditional Zoning (CZ) in the CBD. The proposal approved in July did not include any outdoor areas. Sec. 40-261(o)(6)c requires that any changes to the outdoor areas shall be considered a major modification of the CZ approval.

The applicant is proposing landscaping, outdoor seating, and an exterior walk-in cooler/freezer to the outside of the building. The proposed outdoor seating area is 16 feet by 32 feet. The proposed landscaping area consists of hedges, shrubbery, synthetic turf, and planters surrounding the building. The proposed walk-in cooler/freezer is 7.5 feet by 13.5 feet. Approximately 525 square feet of the landscaping proposal includes a new paver walkway. No changes are proposed to the existing parking lot and driveway cut.

Alcohol point of sale in an outdoor area shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from any property line. Outdoor areas designated for point of sale and consumption shall be designated on the site plan and shall have a barrier that is 4 feet to 6 feet in height. Outdoor alcohol sales are not proposed.

The parking requirement for Event Venues is one per 110 square feet of indoor gross floor area. No parking shall be required for outdoor gross floor area if the establishment is located within 500 feet of public parking spaces. A 50% reduction in the parking requirement shall apply to outdoor gross floor area if the establishment is not within 500 feet of public parking spaces. The total indoor gross floor area of the building is 6,990 square feet. The total number of required spaces for the project is 64. There are 148 total spaces within 500 feet.

The applicant is requesting a waiver to the landscaping requirement to accommodate an existing propane tank. Landscaping requirements may be waived at the discretion of the Planning and Zoning Commission and Council on projects requiring CZ. There is an existing 6-foot fence between the building and the neighboring properties in the MX district.

Event Venues must comply with all Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) and/or Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) standards. On-premise alcohol sales are limited to the duration of the event.

As part of the application process, a community meeting is required. The applicant held the required meeting on November 10, 2023, and six people attended. Based on comments from the meeting, the applicant can place conditions on the project to help mitigate the impacts and concerns from neighboring properties.

#### Proposed conditions

1. Outdoor sales of alcohol are not permitted.
2. The use and development of the subject property shall comply with all regulations and requirements of any other Federal, State, or Local law, ordinance, or regulations.
3. A 20-foot driveway cut must remain open and accessible to the parking lot.
4. A Type B landscape buffer shall be provided and delineated along the perimeter of the property except in areas waived by the Commission and Council.
5. Shall have a barrier that is 4 feet to 6 feet in height that meets ABC standards.

The proposal is in general conformity with the 2020 Land Use Plan, and staff recommends approval with the proposed conditions. The Commission unanimously recommended approval of the project with the addition of the following condition: A Type B landscape buffer shall be permitted in front of the propane tank on the west side of the property.

Mr. Hardison presented the details.

**ACTION:** Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member

Benson, Council Member Hoffer  
*Motion passed unanimously*

Matt Hamlet of 1414 Snapper Lane, who is part-owner of the property, said he and his partners are removing a large amount of impervious surface to make it pervious, which will improve the stormwater situation. He said the outdoor space will not be a large area for people to congregate but more of a transitional space as the venue goes from a wedding ceremony to a reception. Mr. Hamlet said there are no plans for live music there.

No one else requested to speak.

**ACTION:** Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

Council Member Hoffer suggested that the applicant do whatever is necessary to keep people out of the area behind the propane tank.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the project will beautify the area.

Council Member Healy said he loves the idea of pervious surface and has no issues with the proposal.

**ACTION:** Motion that whereas in accordance with the provisions of the NCGS, Town Council does hereby find and determine that the adoption of the Conditional Zoning District modification to allow for an outdoor drinking and serving area with landscaping for the Event Venue/Bar at 205 Charlotte Avenue is consistent with the goals and objectives of the adopted Land Use Plan and other long-range plans and the potential impacts on the surrounding area are mitigated by the approved conditions with the approval of the landscape modification

Motion made by Council Member Healy

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

## **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

### 9. 2024 Parking Policy Discussion

Council reviewed public input and discussed recommendations for the 2024 parking season.

Mr. Oakley said feedback came from a well-attended community input session and online comments, and recommendations are based on that input. He said paid parking is about 10% of the Town's total revenue, and the goal is to not decrease that. Mr. Oakley recommended that Council give direction tonight because there is a lot to be done, including removing polls, ordering signs, and restriping, before paid parking begins on March 1.

Mr. Parvin reviewed public outreach efforts:

- Online feedback (December 1-14)
- Public input session (December 13)
- Continued feedback to staff, contractor, and Council
- 139 written responses from residents/business owners/property owners
- 88 written responses from outside the Town

The following issues were identified:

1. Changing hours and price throughout the year causes confusion.
2. Maintain revenue to offset increases in other fees/property taxes.
3. Off-season should be free.
4. Fines are too punitive.
5. Improve signage.
6. Look for innovations to limit resource needs and improve the program.
7. Constantly changing rules become confusing and frustrating.
8. Use ambassadors and business owners to promote and educate the public on the program.

Recommendations based on feedback

- Owned parking lot and on-street rates: March-October 9:00 AM-9:00 PM (\$5/hour and \$25/day)
- Premium parking lot rates: January-December 9:00 AM-9:00 PM (\$7/hour and \$35/day)

Parking tickets

- Reduce tickets from \$100 to \$60
- 25% reduced cost if paid within 48 hours (\$45 for \$60 ticket and \$18.75 for \$25 ticket)
- All tickets receive a \$50 increase after 30 and 60 days unpaid
- Tickets are \$25 in areas where parking has been paid but one of the designated parking space violations exists and does not cause any loss of access to surrounding public facilities (parking spaces, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)

Mr. Parvin also showed examples of proposed signage.

In an effort to seek innovations, the Town plans to work with the contractor on implementing new strategies for consideration in the 24/25 budget. To prevent constantly changing rules, the Town is requesting a two-year commitment to the general framework of this program. To implement the assistance of ambassadors and business owners, outreach materials, a website, and an informational app are proposed.

Mayor Barbee asked what the backup plan for revenue is if Council decides to end parking enforcement at 8:00 PM instead of 9:00 PM. Mr. Parvin said the Town could get rid of the daily rate for on-street parking and just offer an hourly rate.

Council Member Benson said he would like to work on some additional ideas at the budget retreat, including a nuanced non-resident parking pass option, decoupling Freeman Park management from the

parking contractor, and issuing another request for proposals for parking management after the current contract expires.

Mayor Barbee said tonight's discussion should focus on parking hours, length of the parking season, and parking rates. He said he is leaning toward ending parking enforcement at 8:00 PM and increasing the hourly rate for parking lots.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the purpose of premium lots is to give the Town the ability to be competitive with private companies. She said the Town would have the option to charge year-round if private lots do. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she personally would like to see parking enforcement end at 7:00 PM, but she's not going to fight over it. She said she is in favor of the changes to citations because they were too punitive.

Council Member Healy said he wants to thank everyone who gave feedback. He said he is concerned that implementing some of the proposed changes may reduce the Town's revenue and result in a shortfall, especially once inflation is considered. Council Member Healy said he is fine with \$6 per hour for parking lots and \$5 per hour for on-street parking, and he thinks ending enforcement at 8:00 PM and the reduced ticket fines are fair. He said he is not in favor of non-resident passes because they result in an overall loss of parking revenue. Council Member Healy said he hopes the community will do a better job of promoting the Town and refrain from negative rhetoric after tonight's decision.

Council Member Hoffer said it's tricky to balance the concerns of taxpayers, business owners, and visitors. He said he thinks parking enforcement hours should be 9:00 AM-8:00 PM, and he suggested designating premium lots based on their amenities and proximity to the beach and charging market rates for them. Council Member Hoffer also suggested changing the on-street spaces that have a two-hour maximum to a three-hour maximum because this would allow people to patronize multiple businesses while still meeting the goal of turnover. He said he is open to a discussion about offering non-resident passes for the time period from the day after Labor Day to the day before Memorial Day.

Mayor Barbee said the consensus of Council is for parking enforcement from 9:00 AM-8:00 PM and rates of \$6 per hour in parking lots and \$5 per hour for on-street spaces with no daily rate for the on-street spaces. He asked what the current plan is for premium lots. Mr. Oakley said this year the Town is looking at designating the Surfside lots as premium, but Council can authorize him to designate others as needed. Mayor Barbee said he thinks the Town should go with the current plan before designating additional premium lots. Mr. Oakley said Council can revisit this in July.

Mayor Barbee said non-resident passes have already been voted down several times. He said he thinks a three-hour maximum instead of two is a decision for Mr. Oakley to make, but he does not have a problem with it. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said a discussion with business owners needs to happen before making this change. Mr. Parvin said this policy is in a different part of Town code, so it would need to come back before Council after tonight anyway.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve Ordinance 24-1219 as presented with the following changes: For parking lots, the hours will be 9:00 AM-8:00 PM, free November 1-February 28, and \$6 per hour and \$25 per day; premium parking lots are to be determined by the Town Manager with concurrence of Council



and will also be 9:00 AM-8:00 PM potentially year-round if the other private lots are charging at \$7 per hour and \$35 per day; the designated on-street parking hours will be 9:00 AM-8:00 PM at \$5 per hour, removing the daily rate, and staff will look at three-hour parking

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

Council Member Hoffer said he wants flexibility so the rates of the premium lots can be determined by the Town Manager. Mr. Oakley said he recommends setting the price now, and if changes are proposed Council can adopt another ordinance.

Council Member Healy said he has heard residents say you don't have to pay parking tickets because collection is not pursued. Mr. Oakley said a car is likely to get booted after three violations, and there is a hefty fine to have it removed. He said tickets may also be sent for collection, and although the Town hasn't been very aggressive with this it could change. Mayor Barbee said those with a parking pass won't be able to get another if they have unpaid citations.

Mayor Barbee suggested that staff review signage with at least a couple of Council Members before going to print, and he also wanted Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte and Council Member Benson to review training for Pivot Parking to make sure the Town's expectations are clear.

10. Consider Entering a Lease Agreement for Town-Owned Property at 3 Carolina Beach Avenue South PID R09006-021-004-000

Carolina Beach Land Holdings, LLC, has requested a 10-year lease for the Town's lot at 3 Carolina Beach Avenue South at \$400 per month. North Carolina General Statutes only allow municipalities to lease property for under 10 years. Therefore, the proposed lease is for a term of 9 years and 11 months. The Town originally entered a one-year lease with Carolina Beach Land Holdings in April 2022. The lease expired at the end of March but was renewed in May 2023 for a term that expired on January 1, 2024.

The original use of the property was described as support apparatus and/or queueing area for a Ferris wheel that was to be located on an adjacent property but encroached on the Town's property. In October 2023, the Town was approached about the possibility of a long-term lease for support apparatus for the Ferris wheel. After reviewing General Statutes, the following options were presented to Carolina Beach Land Holdings:

1. Enter into a new lease for less than year or until September.
2. Enter into a new lease beyond a year. The term of the lease can be greater than a year but not longer than 10 years if Council determines the property will not be needed by the Town for the term of the lease. This option will require a published 30-day notice to the public that includes the terms of the lease, including rental or lease payments, and will have to be adopted at a regular Council meeting.
3. The parties could execute an encroachment agreement for the Ferris wheel support apparatus.
4. The parties could exchange equal pieces of real property.

5. An offer to purchase the property could be presented to the Town. If the offer is accepted, it would be subject to the upset bid requirements defined in North Carolina General Statutes.

Carolina Beach Land Holdings asked to pursue a 10-year lease. Before Council is a resolution that would grant the proposed lease at \$400 per month. As required by General Statute, the Town published a 30-day notice that Council would consider the resolution to consider the lease at its January 9, 2024, regular meeting.

Also before Council is the current loan information for the property that was purchased by the Town in 2019. This loan was approved by the Local Government Commission. The public purpose provided at the time was for use as a facility for Ocean Rescue. Ocean Rescue is now located on Hamlet Avenue, and this site is not needed for that use. However, there are plans to use it as a laydown/staging area for the proposed Boardwalk bathroom facility that is scheduled to begin next fall.

Staff recommends against any long-term leases for Town property and recommends the lease payments be, at a minimum, equal to the debt service on the property during the term of the lease.

Mr. Oakley presented the details. He said he currently believes an encroachment agreement will work best.

Mayor Barbee said there are no other instances of the Town leasing property to a for-profit entity, and it's difficult to determine fair market value. He said he agrees that an encroachment agreement should work because the adjacent landowner only needs a little space for the Ferris wheel.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said while she strongly supports the Ferris wheel, she has hesitation about a 10-year lease of public property and agrees that an encroachment agreement is a good choice. She said other options that should be considered before a long-term lease are a property swap or replatting of the Town's lot.

Council Member Healy said everyone wants the Ferris wheel, but he doesn't want to handcuff future Councils with a long-term decision now.

Council Member Benson said the Town could close off the beach access by Nauti Dog and use it as a laydown lot while giving the landowner an encroachment agreement for five years and not asking for anything in return.

Mr. Oakley said an encroachment agreement would be for just a section of the property, so the Town can still use the remainder for a laydown yard. Mayor Barbee said the remaining property could be used for other things, such as non-profit organizations.

Council Member Hoffer said he's interested in an encroachment agreement and also considering a long-term lease, although he thinks 5 years is a better option than 10 years. He said this is an example of partnering with a business owner to bring a valuable asset to downtown, and both parties are looking for certainty. Council Member Hoffer said he wants to consider the entirety of what the

landowner is doing down there because he has concerns that there are too many rides, the area is too crowded and loud, and there are competing concessions.

Council Member Healy asked when the last conversation was with the landowner about this. Mr. Oakley said there have been emails but not an actual conversation for about a year, when they didn't come to any agreements.

Mayor Barbee said Council is not ready to vote on a lease agreement tonight and asked staff to bring back options.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said Council must be considerate of what will happen in the future and do the right thing for the public. She said she would like to consider the possibility of negotiating base rent with a percentage of gross profit.

Mr. Oakley said he will start working with the landowner on the possibility of an encroachment agreement.

#### 11. Appropriate Funds for Ocean Sidewalk Paving Project

The Town received a \$900,000 State Capital Infrastructure Fund (SCIF) grant in February 2022 from the State for paving Carolina Beach Avenue North and a sidewalk on Ocean Boulevard. The Town used \$446,725 of the grant on the paving project with \$473,832.08 remaining for the sidewalk. The lowest responsible responsive bid for the project was \$908,254.55. As a result, an additional \$434,422.47 is needed prior to approval of the contract.

Staff is asking Council to appropriate \$434,422.47 to account 46-580-074 Ocean Sidewalk Capital Project fund: \$20,976 interest earned on Grant Funds and \$413,446.47 from the General Fund fund balance. The fund balance will be reimbursed when grant funds are received for the purchase of Freeman Park. The appropriation will affect the budget until the Town receives the grant funds.

Mr. Oakley presented the details. He said the Ocean Boulevard project became more of a stormwater project than a sidewalk project.

Mayor Barbee said Council has the following options: do nothing and kill the project, approve \$434,422.47, or go back to the engineer to see if the sidewalk can be engineered closer to the houses and somehow come in under \$434,422.47. He said he doesn't think the last option can be done, and the project is a big public safety issue.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve Ordinance 24-1218 amending the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk and Carolina Beach Avenue North improvement projects in the amount of \$434,422.47

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

Council Member Hoffer said he is not prepared to kill the project after going this far, and Council did right by homeowners by moving forward.

12. Consider Supporting the Seabreeze Highway Marker Dedication Ceremony Scheduled for May 31, 2024

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte is requesting that Council consider making a donation toward the Seabreeze highway marker dedication ceremony scheduled for May 31, 2024. She said this date would have been Robert Bruce Freeman Sr.'s 194th birthday. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said a budget of \$15,000 has been set for the event, so she is asking Council to donate \$2,000 to the Federal Point History Center to help with the celebration.

Mayor Barbee said the Freemans have been critical in the development of this area, so he supports the proposal.

**ACTION:** Motion that the Town support the Seabreeze historic highway marker by making a donation to the Federal Point History Center in the amount of \$2,000

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Barbour, Chairman of the Wilmington/New Hanover Port, Waterway & Beach Commission, asked to speak. He thanked Council Members for attending the group's meetings, especially Council Member Healy. Mr. Barbour emphasized the importance of the advisory group and said it is in a good position with funding coming from sources other than the Town. He gave an update on local projects, including dredging of the Carolina Beach Inlet planned for February and beach renourishment in Carolina Beach and Kure Beach scheduled for late fall/winter 2025.

Council Members expressed gratitude to Mr. Barbour for his work and leadership.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked about the Lake Park Boulevard sidewalk and Spartanburg Avenue crosswalk projects. Regarding Lake Park Boulevard, Mr. Oakley said staff met with the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) last week about options. Mr. Hardison said the Spartanburg crosswalk is in the engineer's hands for design, and DOT has given authorization that it meets criteria.

Council Member Healy said he would like to look into getting a new stage downtown before the centennial celebration, including new seating and sun shades.

Council Member Benson said Nancy Busovne is stepping down after 23 years as President of the Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project. He mentioned N.C. Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) stormwater grant opportunities and the delays for the lake dredge bank stabilization project and asked if the marina ticket booth will be back when charters start running in March. Mr. Oakley said he

doesn't think the ticket booth survived, and there is talk of bringing it back or putting a Harbor Master office on that lot.

Mayor Barbee asked for a review of plans for the Beach Patrol. He asked Ms. Ward to notify the N.C. Aquarium Society about the budget schedule for presentations by non-profit groups because representatives asked about sharing information regarding improvements planned for the Fort Fisher facility. Mayor Barbee thanked Mr. Oakley for getting close to having the misspelled Woody Hewett street signs replaced. He asked for a discussion about a facility plan as the Town grows, including a vision for where people would go if there was a staff expansion. Mr. Oakley said this will be a topic at the retreat.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

#### 13. Closed Session – Personnel

**ACTION:** Motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter in accordance with NCGS 143-318.119(a)(6)

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

Mayor Barbee called the meeting back to order.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve an amendment to the Town Manager's contract to include an annual salary of \$190,000, a monthly car allowance of \$650, and 12 months then current base salary if he is terminated by the Town Council, which shall not include any benefits owed.

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.